WORKS OF MARTIN LUTHER - PAPACY AT ROME

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AN ANSWER TO THE CELEBRATED ROMANIST AT LEIPZIG FD1

AFTER all these years of fruitful rain and abundant growth something new has appeared on the scene. Many have essayed to attack me heretofore with vile abuse and glorious lies, yet without much success. But the latest to distinguish themselves are the brave heroes at Leipzig on the marketplace, who desire not only to be seen and admired, but to break a lance with every one.

Their armor is so wonderful that I have never seen the like before. They have put the helmet on the feet, the sword on the head, shield and breastplate on the back, they hold the spear by the point, and the whole armor becomes them so well as to mark them as horsemen of a new sort. FD2

They would prove thereby not only that they have not frittered away their time with dream-books without learning anything, as I accused them, but would also achieve a great name as people who were conceived, born, nursed, cradled, fondled, brought up, and grown up in the Holy Scriptures.

It would be no more than fair that whoever could, should be afraid of them, so that their labor and their good intentions might not be entirely in vain. Leipzig, to produce such giants, must indeed be rich soil.

That you may understand what I mean, observe: Sylvester, Cajetan, Eck, Emser, FD3 and now Cologne and Louvaine FD4 have shown their knightly prowess against me in most strenuous endeavor, and received the honor and glory they deserved; they have defended the cause of the pope and of indulgences against me in such a manner that they might well wish to have had better luck. Finally, some of them thought the best thing to do was to attack me in the same manner as the pharisees attacked Christ. They put forward a champion, and thought: If he wins, we all win with him; if he is defeated, he suffers defeat alone. And the super-learned, circumspect Malvolio FD5 thinks I will not notice it. Very well, in order that all their plans may not miscarry, I will pretend not to understand their game. And I beg them in return, not to take notice, that when I strike the pack, I am aiming at the mule. And if they will not grant this request, I stipulate that, whenever I say anything against the newest Roman heretics and blasphemers of the Scriptures, not merely the poor, immature scribe of the bare-foot friars at Leipzig shall take it to himself, but rather the greathearted flag-bearers, who remain in hiding, and yet would win a notable victory in another's name.

I pray every honest Christian to receive my words — though sometimes barbed with scorn or satire — as coming from a heart that is made to break with sorrow and to turn seriousness into jesting at the sight now beheld at Leipzig, where there are also pious people who would venture body and soul for God's Word and the Scriptures, but where a blasphemer can thus openly speak and write, who esteems and treats God's holy words no better than if they were the fabled pratings of some fool or jester at the carnival. Because my Lord Christ and His holy Word, even He who gave His own blood as the purchase-price, is held to be but mockery and fools' wit, I must likewise drop all seriousness, and see whether I, too, have learned how to play the fool and clown. Thou knowest, my Lord Jesus Christ, how my heart stands toward these arch-blasphemers. That is my reliance, and I will let matters take their course in Thy name. Amen. They must ever abide Thee as the Lord. Amen.

I notice that these poor people are seeking naught else than to gain renown at my expense. They cling to me like mud to a wheel. They would rather have questionable honor shamefully acquired than remain quiet, and the evil spirit uses the designs of such people only to hinder me from doing more useful things. But I welcome the opportunity to give the laity FD6 some explanation of the nature of the Church, FD7 and to contradict the words of these seductive masters. Therefore I intend to treat of the subjectmatter directly, rather than to answer their senseless prattle. I will not mention their names, lest they achieve their true purpose and boastfully regard themselves capable of arguing with me in the Scriptures.

THE STATEMENT OF THE CASE

We are discussing a matter which, taken by itself, is unnecessary, for any one could be a Christian without knowing anything about it. But these idlers who tread under foot all the great essentials of the Christian faith, must needs pursue such things and worry other people, in order to have some object in life.

This then is the question: Whether the papacy at Rome, possessing the actual power over all Christendom (as they say), is of divine or of human origin, FD8 and this being decided, whether it is possible for Christians to say that all other Christians in the world are heretics and apostates, even if they agree with us in holding to the same baptism, Sacrament, Gospel, and all the articles of faith, but merely do not have their priests and bishops confirmed by Rome, or, as it is now, buy such confirmation with money and let themselves be mocked and made fools of like the Germans. Such are the Muscovites, Russians, Greeks, Bohemians, and many other great peoples in the world. For all these believe as we do, baptise as we do, preach as we do, live as we do, and also give due honor to the pope, only they will not pay for the confirmation of their bishops and priests. They will not, like the drunken, stupid Germans, submit to extortion and abuse with indulgences, bulls, seals, parchments, and other Roman stock in trade.

They are ready, too, to hear the Gospel from the pope, or the pope's ambassadors, and yet they are not sent to them.

Now the question is, whether all these may properly be called heretics by us Christians (for of such alone, and of no others, do I speak and write), or whether we are not rather the heretics and apostates, because we brand such Christians as heretics and apostates solely for the sake of money. For when the pope does not send the Gospel to them, and his messengers to proclaim it, although they are eager to receive them, it is clear as day that he is grasping for power and money through this confirmation of bishops and priests. But to this they will not agree, and therefore they are branded as heretics and apostates.

Now I have held, and still hold, that they are not heretics and apostates, but perhaps better Christians than we are, although not all, even as we are not all good Christians. This is challenged, after all its predecessors, by the fine little bare-foot book FD9 of Leipzig, which comes along on clogs — nay, on stilts. It imagines that it alone (among all the others) does not step into the mud; perhaps it would gladly dance if some one would buy it a flute. I must have a try at it.

I say, first of all: No one should be so foolish as to believe that it is the serious opinion of the pope and of all his Romanists and flatterers, that his great power is of divine right. Pray observe, of all that is by divine right not the smallest jot or tittle is observed in Rome, nay, if they think of it at all, it is scorned as foolishness; all of which is as clear as day. They even suffer the Gospel and Christian faith everywhere to go to rack and ruin, and do not intend to lose a hair for it. Yea, all the evil examples of spiritual and temporal infamy flow from Rome, as out of a great sea of universal wickedness, into all the world. All these things cause laughter in Rome, and if any one grieves over them, he is called a Bon Christian, i.e., a fool. If they really took the commands of God seriously, they would find many thousand things more necessary to be done, especially those at which they now laugh and mock. For St. James says, "He that keepeth not one commandment of God, breaketh all." Who would be so stupid as to believe that they seek God's command in one thing, and yet make a mockery of all the others? It is impossible that any one should take one command of God to heart, and not at least be moved by all the others. Now there are ever so many who zealously guard the power of the pope, yet none of them ever ventures a word in favor of even one of the other much greater and more necessary commandments, which are so blasphemously mocked and scornfully rejected at Rome.

Furthermore, if all Germany were to fall on its knees, and to pray that the pope and the Romans should keep this power, and confirm our bishops and priests without payment, for nothing even as the Gospel says, "Freely ye have received, freely give" — and provide all our churches with good preachers, because they have a sufficient abundance of riches to give money instead of taking it; and if it were urged and pressed, that this is their duty according to divine command: believe it surely, we should find all of them arguing with more insistence than any one ever did before, that it is not a divine command to go to so much trouble without pay. They would soon find a little gloss FD10 with which to wind themselves out of it, just as they now find what they desire, to weave themselves into it. All our beseechings would not drive them to it. But since it means money, everything they dare to put forth must be divine command.

The bishopric of Mainz alone, within the memory of men now living, has bought eight pallia FD11 in Rome, every one costing about 30,000 gulden — not to mention the innumerable other bishoprics, prelacies and benefices.

Thus are we German fools to be led by the nose and then they say: It is a divine command to have no bishop without Roman confirmation. I am surprised that Germany, which is by one-half or more in the possession of the Church, FD12 still has so much as one pfennig left by reason of the unspeakable, innumerable, insufferable Roman thieves, knaves and robbers.

It is said that Antichrist shall find the treasures of the earth; I trow the Romanists have found them to such an extent as to make our very life a burden. If the German princes and the nobility will not interfere very shortly, and with decisive courage, Germany will yet become a wilderness and be compelled to devour itself. That would furnish the greatest pleasure for the Romanists, who do not think of us otherwise than as brutes, and have made a proverb concerning us at Rome: "Squeeze the gold from German fools, in any way you can."

The pope does not prevent this scandalous villainy. They all wink at it, yea, they think far more highly of these supreme arch-villains than they do of the holy Gospel of God. They pretend that we are hopeless fools, and that it is a divine command that the pope should have his finger in every pie and do as he pleases with every one, just as if he were a god on earth, and should not rather be the servant of all, FD13 without any pay, if he wished to be — or were — the very highest. But before consenting to this, they would much rather surrender this power and not call this a divine command any more than any other.

But I hear you say, why do they fight so hard against you in this matter?

Answer: I have attacked some higher things, which concern faith and God's Word. And when they were not able to contradict me, and saw that Rome does not trouble itself about such good things, they dropped them too, and attacked me on indulgences and the authority of the pope, in the hope of thus attaining the prize. For they knew very well that where money was concerned, the chief school of knaves in Rome would support them and not remain quiet. But Dr. Luther is just a little proud, and pays very little attention to the grunting and squealing of the Romanists; and this is well-nigh heartbreaking to them. But that does not bother my Lord Jesus, nor Dr. Luther, for we believe that the Gospel will and must continue. Let a layman ask such Romanists, and let them give answer, why they despoil and mock all of God's commandments, and rant so violently about this power, whereas they cannot show at all why it is necessary, or what it is good for. For ever since it has arisen, it has accomplished nothing but the devastation of Christendom, and no one is able to show anything good or useful that has resulted from it. Of this I will speak more fully if this Romanist comes again, and then, please God, I will throw light upon the Holy Chair at Rome and expose it as it deserves to be exposed.

I have said this, not as a sufficient argument for disputing papal power, but in order to show the perverted opinions of those who strain the gnats, but let elephants go through, who behold the mote in the brother's eye and permit the beams in their own to remain, only to the end that others may be stifled by superfluous and unnecessary things, or at least branded as heretics or by any other epithet that occurs to them. One of them is this delicate, pious Romanist at Leipzig. Let us now have a look at him.

I find three strong arguments by which this fruitful and noble little book FD14 of the Romanist at Leipzig attacks me.

The first, and by far the strongest, is, that he calls me names — heretic, a blind, senseless fool, one possessed by the devil, a serpent, a poisonous reptile, and many other names of similar import; not simply once, but throughout the book, almost on every page. FD15 Such reproaches, slanders and calumnies are of no account in other books. But when a book is made at Leipzig, and issued from the cloister of the bare-foot friars, by a Romanist of the high and holy observance FD16 of St. Francis, such names are not merely fine examples of moderation, but likewise strong arguments with which to defend papal power, indulgences, Scripture, faith and the Church. FD17 It is not necessary that any one of these should be proved by Scripture or by reason; it is quite enough that they have been put down in his book by a Romanist and holy observant of the order of St. Francis.

And inasmuch as this Romanist himself writes that the Jews had overcome Christ on the cross with such arguments, I, too, must surrender, and acknowledge that as far as cursing and scolding, abuse and slander are concerned, the Romanist has surely beaten Dr. Luther. On this point he doubtless wins.

The second argument, to express it tersely, is that of natural reason.

This is the argument: A. Every community FD18 on earth, if it is not to fall to pieces, must have a bodily head, under the true head, which is Christ.

B. Inasmuch as all Christendom is one community on earth, it must have a head, which is the pope.

This argument I have designated with the letters A and B for the sake of clearness, and also to show that this Romanist has learned his A-B-C all the way down to B. However, to answer this argument: Since the question is whether the pope's power is by divine right, is it not a bit ridiculous that human reason (that ability which is drawn from experience in temporal things) is brought in and placed on a level with the divine law, especially since it is the intention of this poor presumptuous mortal to bring the divine law against me. For the teachings of human experience and reason are far below the divine law. The Scriptures expressly forbid us to follow our own reason, (Deuteronomy 12:8), "Ye shall not do... every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes;" for human reason ever strives against the law of God, as (Genesis 6:5) says: "Every thought and imagination of man's heart is only evil continually." Therefore the attempt to establish or defend divine order with human reason, unless that reason has previously been established and enlightened by faith, is just as futile as if I would throw light upon the sun with a lightless lantern, or rest a rock upon a reed. For (Isaiah 7:9) makes reason subject to faith, when it says: "Except ye believe, ye shall not have understanding or reason." It does not say, "Except ye have reason, ye shall not believe." Therefore this scribe would better have left his perverted reason at home, or first have well established it with texts of Scripture, so as not to put forth so ridiculous and preposterous a claim and establish the faith and the divine law by mere reason. For if this reason of ours draws the conclusion that a visible community must have a visible overlord or cease to exist, it also must draw the further conclusion, that as a visible community does not exist without wives, therefore the whole Church FD19 must have a visible, common wife, in order not to perish. What a valiant woman that would needs be! Again, a visible community does not exist without a common visible city, house and country; therefore the Church FD20 must have a common city, house and country. But where will you find that? Verily, in Rome they are seeking just this with impatient eagerness, for they have made nearly the whole world their very own. Again, the Church FD20 would likewise need to have in common its visible property, servants, maids, cattle, food, etc., for no community exists without them. See how gracefully human reason stalks along on its stilts.

A professor of theology ought to have considered in advance the clumsiness of such an argument, and proved the divine laws and works by the Scriptures, and not by temporal analogies and worldly reason. For it is written that the divine commandments are justified in and by themselves, and not by any external help. FD21 Again, the wise man says of the wisdom of God: "Wisdom hath overcome the proud with her power." It is most deplorable .that we should attempt with our reason to defend God's Word, whereas the Word of God is rather our defense against all our enemies, as St. Paul teaches us. Would he not be a great fool who in the thick of battle sought to protect his helmet and sword with bare hand and unshielded head? It is no different when we essay, with our reason, to defend God's law, which should rather be our weapon.

From this, I hope, it is clear that the flimsy argument of this prattler fails utterly, and, together with everything he constructs upon it, is found to be without any basis whatever. But that he may the better understand his own mummery, even in case I should grant that a process of reasoning might be entirely valid without the Scriptures, I will show that neither of his arguments is valid, neither the first, A, nor the second, B.

The first, A, is that every community on earth must have one visible head under Christ. This is simply not true. How many principalities, castles, cities, and houses we find where two brothers or lords reign — and with equal authority. The Roman empire governed itself for a long time, and very well, without the one head, and many other countries in the world did the same. How does the Swiss confederacy govern itself at present? Thus in the government of the world there is not one single overlord, yet we are all one human race, descended from the one father, Adam. The kingdom of France has its own king, Hungary its own, Poland, Denmark, and every other kingdom its own, and yet they are one people, the temporal estate in Christendom, without one common head; and still this does not cause these kingdoms to perish. And if there were no government constituted in just this manner, who could or would prevent a community from choosing not one, but many overlords, all clothed with equal power? Therefore it is a very poor procedure to measure the things which are of God's appointing by such vacillating analogies of worldly things, when they do not hold even in the appointments of men. But suppose I should grant this dreamer that his dream is true, and that no community can exist without one visible head; how does it follow that it must likewise be so in the Church? FD22 I know very well that the poor dreamer has a certain conception, according to which a Christian community is the same as any other temporal community. FD23 He thus reveals plainly that he has never learned to know what Christendom, or the Christian community, really is. I had not believed it possible to meet such dense, massive, stubborn error and ignorance in any man, much less in a saint of Leipzig.

For the benefit, therefore, of this numskull, and of those led astray by him, I must first of all explain what is meant by these things — the Church, FD24 and the One Head of the Church. D24 I must talk bluntly, however, and use the same words which they have so barbarously perverted.

The Scriptures speak of the Church FD24 quite simply, and use the term in only one sense; these men have added and brought into general use two more. The first use, according to the Scriptures, is this, that the Church f24 is called the assembly of all the believers in Christ upon earth, just as we pray in the Creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, a communion of saints."

This community or assembly consists of all those who live in true faith, hope and love; so that the essence, life and nature of the Church is not a bodily assembly, but an assembly of hearts in one faith, as St. Paul says, (Ephesians 4:5) "One baptism, one faith, one Lord." Thus, though they be a thousand miles apart in body, yet they are called an assembly in spirit because each one preaches, believes, hopes, loves, and lives like the other.

So we sing of the Holy Ghost: "Thou, who through divers tongues gatherest together the nations in the unity of the faith." FD25 That means in reality a spiritual unity, because of which men are called a communion of saints. And this unity is of itself sufficient to make a Church FD24 and without it no unity, be it of place, of time, of person, of work, or of whatever else, makes a Church. FD24 On this point we must hear the word of Christ, Who, when Pilate asked Him concerning His kingdom, answered: "My kingdom is not of this world." This is indeed a clear passage, in which the Church FD24 is made separate from all temporal communities, as not being anything external. And this blind Romanist makes of it an external community, like any other. Christ says even more clearly, (Luke 17:20-21,) "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here, or lo, there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

I am astounded, that such strong, clear words of Christ are treated as a farce by these Romanists. For by these words it is clear to every one that the kingdom of God (for so He calls His Church) FD26 is not at Rome, nor is it bound to Rome or any other place, but it is where there is faith in the heart, be a man at Rome, or here, or elsewhere. It is a nauseating lie, FD27 and Christ is made a liar when it is said that the Church FD26 is in Rome, or is bound to Rome — or even that the head and the authority are there by divine right.

Moreover, in (Matthew 24:24-26). He foretold the gross deception which now rules under the name of the Roman Church, when He says: "Many false prophets and false Christs shall come in My name, saying: I am Christ; and shall deceive many, and show great signs, that if possible they shall deceive the very elect. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you:

Behold, in the secret chambers is Christ, believe it not; behold, He is in the desert, go not forth. Behold, I have told you before." Is this not a cruel error, when the unity of the Christian Church, FD26 separated by Christ Himself from all material and temporal cities and places, and transferred to spiritual, realms, is included by these preachers of dreams in material communities, FD28 which must of necessity be bound to localities and places. How is it possible, or whose reason can grasp it, that spiritual unity and material unity should be one and the same? There are those among Christians who are in the external assembly and unity, who yet by their sins exclude themselves from the inner, spiritual unity.

Therefore, whosoever maintains that an external assembly or an outward unity makes a Church, FD26 sets forth arbitrarily what is merely his own opinion, and whoever endeavors to prove it by the Scriptures, brings divine truth to the support of his lies, and makes God a false witness, just as does this miserable Romanist, who explains everything that is written concerning the Church FD29 as meaning the outward show of Roman power; and yet he cannot deny that the large majority of these people, particularly in Rome itself, because of unbelief and evil lives, is not in the spiritual unity, i.e., the true Church. F29 For if to be in the external Roman unity made men true Christians, there would be no sinners among them, neither would they need faith nor the grace of God to make them Christians; this external unity would be enough.

From this we conclude, and the conclusion is inevitable, that just as being in the Roman unity does not make one a Christian, so being outside of that unity does not make one a heretic or unchristian. I should like to hear who would dispute this. For that which is essential must make a true Christian; but if it does not make a true Christian, it cannot be essential; just as it does not make me a true Christian to be at Wittenberg or to be at Leipzig.

Now it is clear that external fellowship with the Roman communion FD30 does not make men Christians, and so the lack of that fellowship certainly does not make a man a heretic or an apostate. Therefore it must also be false, that it is a divine command to be in connection with the Roman Church. FD31 For whosoever keepeth one divine command, (James 2:10) keepeth them all, and none can be kept without keeping the others.

Therefore it is an open and blasphemous lie against the Holy Ghost to say that the external unity under Roman authority is the fulfillment of a divine commandment, since there are so many in that unity who neither regard nor fulfill any of the Divine commandments. Hence, to be in this place or that, does not make a heretic: but to be without true faith makes a man a heretic.

Again, it is clear that to be a member of the Roman communion FD32 does not mean to be in true faith, and to be outside of it does not mean to be in unbelief; otherwise those within it would all be believers and truly saved, for no one article of faith is believed without all the other articles.

Therefore all those who make the Christian communion FD33 a material and outward thing, like other communities, are in reality Jews (for the Jews likewise wait for their Messiah to establish an external kingdom at a certain definite place, namely, Jerusalem), and thus sacrifice the faith, which alone makes the kingdom of Christ a thing spiritual and of the heart.

Again, if every temporal community is called after its head, and we say of this city, it is Electoral, and of that, it is Ducal, and of another, it is Frankish; then by right all Christendom should be called Roman, or Petrine, or Papal. But why, then, is it called Christendom? Why are we called Christians, if not from our head, although we are still upon earth? Thereby it is shown that for Christendom there is no other head, even upon earth, than Christ, for it has no other name than the name of Christ. For this reason St. Luke tells us that the disciples were at first called Antiochians, but soon this was changed and they were called Christians. FD34 Furthermore, though a man consists of two natures, namely, body and soul, yet he is not reckoned a member of the Church according to his body, but according to his soul, nay, according to his faith. Otherwise it might be said that a man is a nobler Christian than a woman, because his physical structure is superior to that of a woman, or that a man is a greater Christian than a child, a healthy person a stronger Christian than an invalid; lords and ladies, the rich and powerful, better Christians than servants, maids, and the poor and lowly; whereas Paul writes, (Galatians 3:28; Galatians 5:6) "In Christ is neither male nor female, neither lord nor servant, neither Jew nor Greek," but as far as the body is concerned they are all equal. But he is the better Christian who is greater in faith, hope and love; so that it is plain that the Church FD35 is a spiritual community, which can be classed with a temporal community as little as spirits with bodies, or faith with temporal possessions.

This, indeed, is true, that just as the body is a figure or image of the soul, so also the bodily community is a figure of this Christian, spiritual community, and as the bodily community has a bodily head, so the spiritual community has a spiritual head. But who would be so bereft of sense as to maintain that the soul must have a bodily head? That would be like saying that every live animal must have on its body a painted head. If this literalist (I should say, literary person) had really understood what the Church FD35 is, without doubt he would have been ashamed even to contemplate such a book as his. What wonder, therefore, that from a darkened and wandering brain issues no light, but thick, black darkness St. Paul says, (Colossians 3:3) "Our life is not on earth, but hid with Christ in God." For if the Church were a bodily assembly, you could tell by looking at the body whether any one were Christian, Turk or Jew; just as you can tell by the body whether a person is a man, woman or child, or whether he is white or black. Again, I can tell whether one is gathered in temporal assembly with others in Leipzig, Wittenberg, or elsewhere; but I cannot tell at all whether he is a believer or not.

Whosoever would not go astray should, therefore, hold fast to this, that the Church FD35 is a spiritual assembly of souls, in one faith, and that no one is reckoned a Christian for his body's sake; in order that he may know that the true, real, right, essential Church FD36 is a spiritual thing, and not anything external or outward, by whatever name it may be called. For one who is not a Christian may have all those other things, and they will never make him a Christian without true faith, which alone makes Christians. For this reason we are called Christian believers, and on Pentecost we sing: *We beseech Thee, Holy Spirit, f36 Let true faith our portion be.*

It is in this wise, and never in any other, that the Holy Scriptures speak of the Holy Church and of Christendom.

Beyond that, another way of speaking of Christendom has come into use.

According to this, the name Church is given to an assembly in a house or a parish, a bishopric, an archbishopric, or the papacy, in which assembly external rites are in use, such as chanting, reading, vestments. And primarily the name of "spiritual estate" is given to the bishops, priests and members of the holy orders; not on account of their faith, which they perhaps do not have, but because they have been consecrated with an external anointing, wear crowns, use a distinctive garb, make special prayers and do special works, say mass, have their places in the choir, and attend to all such external matters of worship. But violence is done to the word "spiritual," or "Church," when it is used for such external affairs, whereas it concerns faith alone, which, working in the soul, makes right and true spirituales and Christians; yet this manner of using it has spread everywhere, to the great injury and perversion of many souls, who think that such outward show is the spiritual and only true estate in Christendom or the Church.

There is not one letter in the Holy Scriptures to show that such a purely external Church has been established by God; and I hereby challenge all those who have made this blasphemous, damnable, heretical book, or would defend it, together with all their followers, even if all the universities hold with them. If they can show me that even one letter of the Scriptures speaks of it, I am willing to recant. But I know that they cannot do it. The Canon Law and human statutes, indeed, give the name of Church or Christendom to such a thing, but that is not now before us. Therefore, for the sake of brevity and a better understanding, we shall call the two churches by different names. The first, which is the natural, essential, real and true one, let us call a spiritual, inner Christendom. The other, which is man-made and external, let us call a bodily, external Christendom: not as if we would part them asunder, but just as when I speak of a man, and call him, according to the soul, a spiritual, according to the body, a physical, man; or as the Apostle (Romans 7:22) is wont to speak of the inner and of the outward man. Thus also the Christian assembly, according to the soul, is a communion FD38 of one accord in one faith, although according to the body it cannot be assembled at one place, and yet every group is assembled in its own place. This Christendom is ruled by Canon Law and the prelates of the Church. FD39 To this belong all the popes, cardinals, bishops, prelates, monks, nuns and all those who in these external things are taken to be Christians, whether they are truly Christians at heart or not.

For though membership in this communion FD38 does not make true Christians, because all the orders mentioned may exist without faith; nevertheless this communion is never without some who at the same time are true Christians, just as the body does not give the soul its life, and yet the soul lives in the body and, indeed, can live without the body. Those who are without faith and are outside of the first community, but are included in this second community, are dead in the sight of God, hypocrites, and but like wooden images of true Christians. And so the people of Israel were a type of the spiritual people, assembled in faith.

The third use of the term applies the word Church, not to Christendom, but to the edifices erected for purposes of worship. And the word "spiritual" is so stretched as to cover temporal possessions, not the possessions which are truly spiritual because of faith, but those which are in the second or external Church, FD40 and such possessions are called "spiritual" or Church possessions. FD41 Again, the possessions of the laity are called "worldly," although the laymen who are in the first or spiritual Church FD41 are much better than the worldly clergy and are truly spiritual. After this fashion it now goes with almost all the works and the government of the Church; FD41 and the name "spiritual possessions" has been so exclusively applied to worldly possessions that now no one understands it to mean anything else, and this has gone so far that men regard neither the spiritual nor the external Church any more, and they squabble and quarrel about temporal possessions like the heathen, and say, they do it for the sake of the Church and of spiritual possessions. Such perversion and misuse of words and things has come from the Canon Law and human statutes, to the unspeakable corruption of Christendom.

Now let us consider the head of Christendom. From the foregoing it follows that the first-named Christendom, which alone is the true Church, may not and cannot have a head upon earth, and that no one on earth, neither bishop nor pope, can rule over it; only Christ in heaven is the head, and He ruleth alone.

This is proved, first of all, in this way: How can a man rule over anything which he does not know or understand? And who can know whether a man truly believes or not? Aye, if the power of the pope extended to this point, then he could take away a Christian's faith, or direct its progress, or increase it, or change it, according to his pleasure, just as Christ can do.

In the second place, it is proved by the nature of the head. For it is the nature of every head joined to a body to infuse into all its members life and feeling and activity. This will be found to be true of the heads in worldly affairs. For the ruler of a country instils into his subjects all the things which are in his own mind and will, and causes all his subjects to be of like mind and will with himself, and thus they do the work he wishes to have done, and this work is truly said to have been instilled into the subjects by the prince, for without him it would not have been done. Now no man can instil into the soul of another, nor into his own soul, true faith, and the mind, will and work of Christ, but this Christ Himself must do. For neither pope nor bishop can produce faith in a man's heart, nor anything else a Christian member should have. But a Christian must have the mind and will which Christ has in heaven, as the apostle says, (1 Corinthians 2:16; Corinthians 3:23). It may also happen that a Christian member has the faith which neither pope nor bishop has; how then can the pope be his head? And if the pope cannot give to himself the life of the spiritual church, how can he instil it into another? Who has ever seen a live animal with a lifeless head? The head must give life to the body, and therefore it is clear that on earth there is no other head of the spiritual Christendom but Christ alone.

Moreover, if a man were its head here below, Christendom would perish as often as a pope dies. For the body cannot live when the head is dead.

It follows further, that in this Church Christ can have no vicar, and therefore neither pope nor bishop is Christ's vicar or regent in this Church, nor can he ever become such. And this is proved as follows: A regent, if obedient to his lord, labors with and urges on the subjects and instils into them the same work which his lord himself instils, just as we see in temporal government, where there is one mind and will in lord, regents, and subjects. And if he were more holy than St. Peter, the pope can never instil into or create in a Christian man the work of Christ his Lord, i.e., faith, hope, love, and every grace and virtue.

And if such illustration and proof were not without flaw, though founded on the Scriptures, yet St. Paul stands strong and immovable (Ephesians 4:15-16) giving to Christendom but one head and saying, "Let us be true (i.e., not external, but real and true Christians) and grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from Whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Here the apostle says clearly that the building up and increase of Christendom, which is the body of Christ, cometh alone from Christ, Who is its Head. And where can there be found another head on earth to whom such nature could be ascribed, especially since these "heads" in most cases have neither love nor faith? Besides, St. Paul referred in these words to himself, to St. Peter, and to every other Christian; and if another head were necessary he would have been utterly false in saying nothing about it.

I know very well that there are some who dare to say in reference to this and similar passages that though Paul was silent, he did not thereby deny that St. Peter was also a head, but was feeding the unwise with milk. Just listen to this: they claim that it is necessary for salvation to have St. Peter for a head, and yet they have the effrontery to say that Paul concealed the things which are necessary to salvation. Thus these senseless goats would rather blaspheme Paul and the Word of God than be convinced of their error, and they call it "milk for babes" when Christ is proclaimed, and "strong meat" when St. Peter is proclaimed, just as if Peter were higher, greater, and more difficult to understand than Christ himself. And this is called explaining the Scriptures and overcoming Dr. Luther; this is the way to run out of the rain and fall into the trough. What could such babblers accomplish if we should have a disputation with the Bohemians FD42 and the heretics? Truly nothing, except that we should be made a mockery for all, and give them due cause to look upon us all as blustering idiots, and they become more strongly entrenched in their own belief through the foolishness of our side.

But then you ask: If the prelates are neither heads nor regents of this spiritual Church, what are they?

Let the laymen answer this, when they say: St. Peter is a messenger FD43 and the other apostles are messengers too. Why should the pope be ashamed to be a messenger, if St. Peter himself is no more? But beware, ye laymen, or the super-learned Romanists will burn you at the stake as heretics because ye would make the pope a messenger and letter-carrier.

But ye have a strong argument, for the Greek Apostolos in German "messenger," and thus are they called throughout the Gospel.

If, then, they are all messengers of the one Lord Christ, who would be so foolish as to say that so great a lord, in a matter of such great importance for the whole world, sends but one messenger, and he, in turn, sends other messengers of his own? Then St.Peter would have to be called, not a Zwolfbote (one of the twelve messengers), but an only-messenger, and none of the others would remain Zwolfboten, but they would all be St.

Peter's Elfboten (i.e., his eleven messengers). But what is the custom at court? Is it not true that a lord has many messengers? Aye, when does it happen that many messengers are sent with the same message to one place, as now we have priest, bishop, archbishop and pope, all ruling over the same city, not to mention other tyrants, who shove in their rule somewhere between the rest? Christ sent all the apostles into the world with His Word and message with full, equal powers, as St. Paul says: (2 Corinthians 5:20) "We are ambassadors for Christ." And in (1 Corinthians 3:5) he says: "What is Peter? What is Paul? Servants through whom ye believed."

This ambassadorship means to feed, to rule, to be bishop, and so forth. But that the pope makes all the messengers of God to be subject to himself, is the same as if one messenger of a prince detained all the other messengers, and then sent them out when it suited his pleasure, while he himself went nowhere. Would that be pleasing to the prince, if he found it out?

Should you say: True, but one messenger may be above another; I would reply: One may indeed be better and more skillful than another, as St. Paul was when compared with Peter; but since they bring one and the same message, one cannot be above another by reason of his office. But, put the other way, St. Peter is not a Zwolfbote at all, but a special messenger and lord over the Eleven. What can it be that one has above the others, if they all have one and the same message and commission from the one Lord?

Forasmuch then as all bishops are equal by divine right and sit in the Apostles' places, I may gladly concede that by human right one is above the other in the external Church. For here the pope instils what is in his own mind, as, for instance, his Canon Law and human inventions, whereby Christendom is ruled with outward show; but that does not make Christians, as I have said above; neither are they heretics who are not under the same laws and ceremonies or human ordinances. For customs change with the country.

All this is confirmed by the article in the Creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, one Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints." No one says: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, one Holy Roman Church, a Communion of the Romans." Thus it is clear that the Holy Church is not bound to Rome, but is as wide as the world, the assembly of those of one faith, a spiritual and not a bodily thing, for that which one believes is not bodily or visible. The external Roman Church we all see, therefore it cannot be the true Church, which is believed, and which is a community or assembly of the saints in faith, for no one can see who is a saint or a believer.

The external marks, whereby one can perceive where this Church is on earth, are baptism, the Sacrament, and the Gospel; and not Rome, or this place, or that. For where baptism and the Gospel are, no one may doubt that there are saints, even if it were only the babes in their cradles. But neither Rome nor the papal power is a mark of the Church, FD45 for that power cannot make Christians, as baptism and the Gospel do; and therefore it does not belong to the true Church FD45 and is but a human ordinance.

Therefore I would advise this Romanist to go to school another year, and to learn what the Church or the head of the Church FD45 really means, before he drives out the poor heretics with writings of such height, depth, breadth and length. It grieves me to the heart that we must suffer these mad saints to tear asunder and blaspheme the Holy Scriptures with such insolence, license, and shamelessness, and that they make bold to deal with the Scriptures, whereas they are not fit to care for a herd of swine.

Heretofore I have held that where something was to be proved by the Scriptures, the Scriptures quoted must really refer to the point at issue. I learn now that it is enough to throw many passages together helter-skelter, whether they are fit or not. If this is to be the way, then I can easily prove from the Scriptures that beer is better than wine. FD46 Of the same character is his statement in both his Latin and his German treatise FD47 that Christ is the head of the Turks, heathen, Christians, heretics, robbers, harlots and knaves. It would be no wonder if all the stone and timber in the cloister stared and hooted this miserable wretch to death for his horrible blasphemy. What shall I say? Has Christ become a keeper of all the houses of shame, a head of all the murderers, of all heretics, of all rogues? Woe unto thee, thou miserable wretch, that thou thus holdest up thy Lord for all the world to blaspheme! The poor man would write about the head of Christendom, and in utter madness imagines that "head" and "Lord" are one and the same. Christ is, indeed, Lord of all things, of all the good and the evil, of the angels and the devils, the virgins and the harlots; but He is not the head, except only of the good, believing Christians, assembled in the spirit. For a head must be united with its body, as I showed above from St. Paul (Ephesians 4:15-16) and the members must cleave to the head and receive from it their activity and life. For this reason Christ cannot be the head of an evil community, although it is subject unto Him as Lord; even as His kingdom, namely Christendom, is not a bodily community or kingdom, yet all things are subject unto Him, be they spiritual or bodily, of hell or of heaven.

Thus in his first argument this reviler vilified and slandered me; in this second argument he reviled Christ much more than me. For even if he thinks much of his own holy prayers and fastings in contrast to a poor sinner like me, yet he has not called me a brothelkeeper and archknave, as he has Christ.

Now comes the third argument, in which the high majesty of God is made a target, and the Holy Spirit becomes a liar and a heretic, so that by all means the contention of the Romanists may be upheld.

The third argument is taken from the Scriptures, just as the second was taken from reason and the first from folly, so that everything may be done in proper order. It runs as follows: The Old Testament was a type of the New Testament, and because it had a bodily high-priest, the New Testament must have one likewise — how else shall the type be fulfilled?

For has not Christ Himself said: (Matthew 5:18) "Not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass away; it shall all be fulfilled"?

A book more foolish, senseless, and blind I have never seen. Once before, another FD49 wrote the same thing against me, so coarse and foolish that I could not but scorn it. But because they have not sharpened their wits, I must speak bluntly for the thickheads; I see that the ass does not appreciate a harp, I must offer him thistles.

In the first place, it is evident that a type is material and external, and the fulfillment of the type is spiritual and internal; what the type reveals to the bodily eye, its fulfillment must reveal to the eye of faith alone, or it is not really a fulfillment.

I must prove that by illustration. By many miracles the Jewish people came in a bodily manner out of the bodily land of Egypt, as is written in the book of Exodus. (Exodus 13:18ff) This type does not mean that we, too, shall in a bodily manner come out of Egypt, but that our souls by a right faith shall come forth from sins and the spiritual power of the devil; so that the bodily assembly of the Jewish people signifies the spiritual and internal assembly of the Christian people in faith. Thus, as they drank water from a bodily rock, and ate bodily manna with the bodily mouth, so with the mouth of the heart we drink and eat of the spiritual Rock, the Lord Christ, when we believe in Him. Again, Moses set a serpent on a pole, and whosoever looked upon it was made whole. That signifies Christ on the Cross; whosoever believeth in Him, is saved. And so throughout the entire Old Testament, all the bodily, visible things in it signify in the New Testament spiritual and inward things, which one cannot see, but possesses only in faith.

St. Augustine understood the types in this manner, when he says FD50 (John 3:14) "This is the difference between the type and its fulfillment: the type gave temporal goods and life, but the fulfillment gives spiritual and eternal life." Now the outward show of Roman power can give neither temporal nor eternal life, and therefore it is not only no fulfillment of the type of Aaron, but far less than the type, for that was established by divine direction. For if the papacy could give either eternal or temporal life, all the popes would be saved and be in good health. But he who has Christ and the spiritual Church, is truly saved and has the fulfillment of the type, yet only in faith. And since the pope's external show and the oneness of his Church can be seen with the eyes, and we all see it, it is not possible that he can be the fulfillment of any type. For the fulfillment of types must not be seen, but believed.

Now see — are they not skillful masters who make the high-priest of the Old Testament to be a type of the pope, when the latter makes as much, nay more of an external show than the former, and thus a bodily thing is made to be the fulfillment of a bodily type! That would mean that type and fulfillment are exactly alike. But if this type is to stand, the new high-priest must be spiritual, and his graces and adornment likewise spiritual. The prophets also saw this when they said of us, (<19D209> Psalm 132:9) "Thy priests shall be clothed with faith or righteousness, and Thine anointed ones shall be adorned with joy." As if he would say: Our priests are types, and are clothed externally with silks and purples, but your priests shall be clothed with grace inwardly. Thus is this miserable Romanist routed with his "type," and his jumbling together of much Scripture has been in vain. For the pope is an external priest, and they think of him in his external power and adornment. Therefore Aaron cannot have been a type of him; we must have another.

In the second place — in order that they may realize how far they are from the truth — even if they had been wise enough to give a spiritual fulfillment to the type, yet that would not stand the test, unless they had a clear passage from the Scriptures, which brought the type and its spiritual fulfillment together; otherwise every one could make out of it what he desired. For instance, that the serpent lifted up by Moses signifies Christ, is taught by John (John 3:14). If it were not for that passage my reason might evolve very strange and weird fancies out of that type. Again, that Adam was a type of Christ, I learn not from myself, but from St. Paul (Romans 5:14) Again, that the rock in the wilderness signifies Christ, is not so stated by my reason, but by St. Paul (1 Corinthians 10:4).

Therefore, let none other explain the type but the Holy Spirit Himself, Who has given the type and wrought the fulfillment, in order that both promise and performance, type and fulfillment, and the interpretation of both, may be God's own and not man's, and our faith be founded not on human, but on divine works and words.

What leads the Jews astray but that they interpret the types as they please, without the Scriptures? What has led so many heretics astray but the interpretation of the types without reference to the Scriptures? And though the pope were something spiritual, yet even then it would count for nothing if I made Aaron to be his type, unless I could point to a passage where it is explicitly stated: Behold, Aaron was a type of the pope. Otherwise who could prevent me from assuming that Aaron was a type of the bishop of Prague? St. Augustine has stated that types are not valid in controversy unless supported by the Scriptures. FD51 But now this poor chatterbox has neither: no spiritual, inward high-priest and no passage of the Scriptures; he goes at it blindly with his own dreams, and assumes as his basis that Aaron was the type of St. Peter, the very thing which is in greatest need of foundation and proof, and he just goes on prattling that the law must be fulfilled and not one iota omitted. My dear Romanist, who has ever doubted that the law of the Old Testament and its types must be fulfilled in the New? There was no need of your scholarship to establish that. But here you might make a great show and demonstrate by your ingenuity that this fulfillment occurs in Peter or in the pope. You are as mute as a stick when it is time to speak out, and a chatterbox when speech is unnecessary. Have you not learned your logic better than that?

You argue your major premises, which no one questions, and assume the correctness of your minor premises, which every one questions, and then you draw the conclusion to suit yourself.

Listen to me, I will give you a better lesson in logic. I agree with you in saying: All that is typified by the high-priest in the Old Testament must be fulfilled in the New, as St. Paul says (1 Corinthians 10:6). Thus far we agree. Now you continue: St. Peter, or the pope, was typified by Aaron.

Here I say, Nay. And what can you do then? Now show your learning, and call the whole crowd of Romanists to assist you, bring just one jot or tittle from the Scriptures in defense, and I will call you a hero. On what foundation have you builded, however? On your own dreams; and yet you boast you will argue against me with the Scriptures. It was not necessary for you thus to play the fool against me, I should have had a fool to overcome at any rate.

Listen to me further: I say that Aaron was a type of Christ, and not of the pope. And when I say this, I do not utter my own invention, as you do; but I will prove it, so that neither you, nor the world, nor all the devils shall overthrow it. In the first place, Christ is a spiritual priest for the inner man; for He sitteth in heaven, and maketh intercession for us as a priest, teaches us inwardly in the heart, and does everything a priest should do in mediating between God and man, as St. Paul says, (Romans 3:25), and the whole Epistle to the Hebrews. Aaron, the type, is bodily and external, but the fulfillment is spiritual and inward, and the two agree together.

Secondly, in order not to bring my own thoughts, I have the passage, (<19B004> Psalm 110:4), "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent: Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Can you also bring a passage like that about St. Peter or the pope? For I think that you will not deny that this passage refers to Christ, as St. Paul, (Hebrews 5:6), and at many other places, and our Lord Christ Himself, (Matthew 22:44), so explain it. Thus we can see how beautifully the Romanists treat the Scriptures and make out of them what they like, as if they were a nose of wax, to be pulled around at will.

Now we have proved by the Scriptures that Christ is the High-priest of the New Testament. Clearer still is Paul's comparison of Aaron and Christ (Hebrews 9:6ff.), when he says: "Into the first tabernacle the priests went every day, to offer the sacrifices; but into the second went the highpriest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sin of the people. The Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way to the true, holy tabernacle was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a type or figure needful for the time then present. But Christ being come, a high-priest of spiritual possessions to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this temporal building: neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained an eternal redemption."

What do you say to this, my super-learned Romanist? Paul says: The highpriest typified Christ; you say, St. Peter. Paul says, Christ entered not into a temporal building; you say, He is in the temporal building at Rome. Paul says, He entered in once, and hath obtained an eternal redemption, and makes the type to be altogether spiritual and heavenly, which you make to be earthly and external. What can you do now? My advice is this: Clench your fist, smite him on the jaw, and say he is a liar, a heretic, a poisoner, just as you do to me; and you will be like your father Zedekiah, who smote Micaiah on the cheek. Do you not see, wretched blasphemer, whither your counsellors and your own madness have brought you? Where are they now, those big-wigs, who interdicted my sermon on both kinds in the Sacrament? FD52 It served them right. They would not tolerate nor hear the Gospel, and now they shall hear instead the lies and blasphemies of the Evil Spirit, even as Christ says to the Jews, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

But you might say, St. Peter too is typified by Aaron, along with Christ; and I answer, if you must keep on, you could also say that Aaron was a type of the Turk; and who could prevent you, since you delight in such senseless chatter. But you have given promise to argue from the Scriptures; now do it, and leave your dreams at home. Moreover, where faith is concerned, one must contend not with uncertain Scripture texts, but with those that refer to the issue in a way that is certain, clear, and simple; otherwise the Evil Spirit would toss us hither and you, until at last we should not know at all where we were; just as has happened to many with these little words, Petros and Petra (Matthew 16:18).

It would have been something less of a lie and a blasphemy for you to have said that Aaron was a type of Christ and also of St. Peter. But now you just scream with all your might that Aaron was not a type of Christ, but of St. Peter, and wantonly you strike St. Paul in the face. And in order that nothing may be lacking in this perfect piece of folly, you go on to say:

Moses was a type of Christ. And you say this not only without any cause or indication in the Scriptures — just as if you were more than God, and everything which you emit must be taken for Gospel — but contrary to all the Scriptures, which make Moses a type of the Law, as St. Paul does (2 Corinthians 3:7). It is not necessary to go into this just now, else you might strike him on the jaw again in your wantonness and insolence. Such venom you have imbibed from that man Emser's heretical and blasphemous output, FD54 which I will give the answer it deserves when Sir Knight Eck comes along with his flourish. FD55 You cannot carry it off along with his flourish, FD55 You cannot carry it off in that way, my dear Romanists. I cannot prevent it by force, but you shall not bring any Scripture in support of it. Praise God, I am not quite ready to bite the dust.

Now it is clear, I take it, that the third argument of this Romanist is rank heresy and blasphemy, for it flatly contradicts God the Holy Ghost and makes Him a liar, and utterly demolishes St. Paul. For since Aaron is a type of Christ, he cannot be a type of St. Peter. For what the Scriptures ascribe to Christ must not be ascribed to any other, so that the Scriptures may ever have one simple, direct, indisputable meaning, on which our faith may rest without wavering. This I will grant, that Peter is one of the twelve precious stones in the breastplate of Aaron, whereby there may be signified that the twelve Apostles, chosen in Christ, and known from all eternity, are the highest and most precious jewels in Christendom, but I can never allow Peter to become Aaron. Again, I will admit that St. Peter is one of the twelve lions that stood beside Solomon's great throne, but Christ must remain for me the one King Solomon. I will let the twelve Apostles be the twelve wells of water in the wilderness of Elim, on this condition, however, that the bright cloud and pillar shall be nothing other than Christ himself.

And just as little as the power of any one of these twelve extends over the others, so little does Peter have power over the other Apostles, and the pope over other bishops and priests, by divine right.

One thing more, my good, dear Romanists, and then I have done. I ask most graciously for a correct answer. If Aaron was a type of the pope in external authority, vestments and state, why was he not a type in all other external and bodily matters; if it holds in one thing, why not in all the others?

It is written that the high-priest shall not take a widow or a divorced woman, but shall wed a virgin; why do they not give the pope a virgin to wed, so that the type may be fulfilled? Nay, why does the pope forbid matrimony to the whole priesthood, not only contrary to the Old Testament type, but also in opposition to God, and against right, reason, and nature, a thing which he has no authority, nor power, nor right to do, and over which the Church has never exercised authority, nor should it ever do so. So by his own caprice, without need, he has caused Christendom to be filled with whores, sinners, and guilty consciences, as St. Paul says of him, (1 Timothy 4:1 ff.): "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created, etc."

Does Paul herein not hit the Roman laws, which forbid the priesthood to marry, and command all Christians to abstain from butter, eggs, milk, and meats on certain days, while God Himself has left it to the free choice of Christians in every estate to eat or to marry, as they desire? Where are you now, my Romanist of the observance, with all your ranting that not one detail of the Old Testament type shall be omitted, and that every iota must be fulfilled? Yea, where is the pope, the successor of St. Peter, who was married, as was St. Paul FD56 and all the Apostles?

Again, the Old Testament high-priest was not permitted to have his head shorn. But why does the pope have a tonsure, and all the other priests, too? Wherein is the type fulfilled here to the very dot? Again, the Highpriest was forbidden to own any portion of Israel's land, but subsisted entirely on the offerings of the people. Pray, why is the occupant of the papal throne so furious to possess the whole world, and has not only stolen lands and cities, principalities and kingdoms, FD57 but has arrogated to himself the power to make kings and princes, seat and unseat and change them according to his pleasure, as if he were Antichrist. Wherein is there here a fulfillment of the type?

Again, the Old Testament high-priest was a subject under the rule of the kings. Why then does the pope have men kiss his feet, and aspire to be king of kings, which Christ Himself did not? Wherein is the type fulfilled here?

Again, the high-priest was circumcised. And, finally, if having the external things in the New Testament identical with those of the Old be the fulfillment of types, why do we not become Jews again and keep the whole law of Moses? If we must observe it in one particular, why not in all? If not in all, why in one?

If it be desired to elevate the New Testament above the Old in the matter of outward splendor, would it not be reasonable to suppose that there should be more than one high-priest in the New Testament, to make it more splendid and glorious than the Old, which did not have more than one? If reason should judge in this case and follow its own bent, what do you suppose it would do? Again, in the time of the Old Testament highpriest there were many holy men who were not under him, such as Job and his family — for he was not alone. Likewise the king of Babylon, the queen of Sheba, the widow of Zarephath, the prince Naaman of Syria, and many others in Eastern lands, together with their families, who are all commended in the Scriptures. Why does not the type hold in these instances, even to the letter? And yet the pope will let no one be a Christian except he be subject to him, and buy his seals and parchments at any price his Romanists please to charge. Or do the Romanists have power to interpret types as they please and as far as they please, without any warrant of the Scriptures?

Do you not see, my good Romanist, how envy and hatred have blinded you and your kind? Would it not have been a more seemly thing for you to have remained in your cell praying your vigils until you had been called or urged into this case? You do not know what a type is or signifies, and yet you boast of being a teacher and master of all the Holy Scriptures, FD58 Yea, verily, a master in corrupting the Scriptures, and blaspheming God, and libeling truth. Come again, my dear Romanist, and I will deck you with lilies and give you for a new year's present FD59 to those who have sent you.

I, too, desire to say one thing that is not in the Scriptures. In all estates which God has appointed there are always some who are saved, and no estate is without living saints on earth, as Christ says, (Luke 17:34), "Two men shall be in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left," etc. If the papacy were from God it would be impossible for a pope to be damned, because there is but one person at a time in that estate, and whoever became pope would thereby be assured of his salvation; which is contrary to all the Scriptures.

Now let us see how these pious people treat the holy words of Christ in this case. Christ says to St. Peter, (Matthew 16:18) "Thou art, or art called, Peter; and on the Petram (i. e., on the rock) I will build My Church.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." From these words they have claimed the keys for St. Peter alone; but the same Matthew has barred such erroneous interpretation (Matthew 18:18), where Christ says to all in common, "Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." It is clear that Christ here interprets His own words, and in this 18th chapter explains the former 16th; namely, that the keys are given to St. Peter in the stead of the whole Church, FD60 and not for his own person. Thus also John, in the last chapter, (John 20:22), "He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." To maintain the sole authority of St. Peter, when there are two texts against one, many men have labored in vain. But the Gospel is too clear, and they have had to admit until now that in the first passage nothing special was given to St. Peter for his own person.

Thus it was also understood by many of the ancient Church fathers. It is likewise proved by the words of Christ just before He gave the keys to St. Peter, where He asks not Peter only, but all of them: "What think ye of Me?" (Matthew 16:15), Then Peter answers for them all, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Therefore the words in (Matthew 16:18) must be understood in accordance with the words in (Matthew 18:16), and in (John 20:22); and one passage must not be explained in a manner contrary to two strong ones, but the one be properly explained by the two. The proof is all the stronger where there are two instead of only one, and it is but fair that one should follow the two, and not two the one.

It is plain, therefore, that all the apostles were equal to Peter in all matters of authority. This is shown by their acts as well as by their words, for Peter never selected an apostle, nor made, confirmed, sent out, or ruled over one; although if he had been their superior by divine appointment this would have had to be, or all of them would have been heretics. Moreover, all of the apostles together could not make St. Matthias and St. Paul apostles, but this must needs be done from heaven, as it is written in Acts (Acts 1:23 ff.), and (Acts 13:2). How then could St. Peter alone be lord over them all? This little nut no one has been able to crack as yet, and I trust they will be so gracious, even against their will, to leave it uncracked a while longer.

And just as this Romanist boasts that the papal chair survives in spite of repeated assaults on its authority, FD61 so I, too, boast that the Roman See ofttimes, and to this very day, has striven in mad frenzy for such power, yet has never been able to attain it, and, God willing, shall never attain it. It is an utter farce when a man boasts that he has always kept what he has never had. Why does not our dear Romanist boast also that the city of Leipzig has never been taken away from him, in which he does not even have a house? It would be a boast of equal value with the other. So they chatter on incessantly; anything that comes to their tongues is blurted out.

Therefore, I say, that though the Roman tyrants have striven hard against the Gospel, to take the common power of the Church and make it their own, yet the word of Christ still stands, "The powers of hell shall not prevail against it." Now if this power had been given to the pope by divine right, God would not have desisted; at some time it would have been fulfilled. For he says that "not a jot or letter shall remain unfulfilled." But in the extension of Roman power over all Christendom not one letter has ever been fulfilled.

And it does not help to say, it is not the fault of the Romans, but of the heretics, that it has not been fulfilled. Heretic here, heretic there! God's order and promise cannot be hindered or prevented by the gates of hell, much less by the heretics; surely He is strong enough to make true His own Word, without the help of heretics. And inasmuch as He has never done so, and leaves it unfulfilled to this day, regardless of all the zeal, diligence, toil and labor, and cunning and trickery besides, which the Romans have expended on it, I hope it is sufficiently established just what the pope's authority is, beyond that of other bishops and priests; namely, that it is of human and not of divine right. Christ's kingdom has been at all times in all the world, as is written in (Psalm 2:8) and (Psalm 19:4), but never was it entirely under the pope, even for one hour, in spite of those who say otherwise.

Although all this is well-established truth, we shall nevertheless proceed to demolish their idle fairy-tales still more, and say: Even if it were not valid that the two sayings in Matthew and John, (Matthew 18:18) and (John 20:22), which make the power of the keys a common possession, should explain the one saying of Matthew, which sounds as if the keys were given to Peter alone; yet the case cannot proceed any further than to establish a doubt, whether the one passage shall interpret the two, or the two the one, and I hold as tenaciously to the two, as they to the one.

Furthermore, that doubt gives certainty to us, so that it is entirely for us to say whether we will have the pope for a head or not. For where a matter is in doubt, no one is a heretic, whether he hold to one view or to another; this they themselves admit. And thus their argument again is brought to naught, and they can produce nothing but uncertainty and doubt. Therefore they must either give up all three passages as inadequate to establish their case, since their meaning is obscure; or else they must cite others, which explicitly indicate that the two must be interpreted by the one. This they cannot do; I defy them to try it.

But I will cite passages by which I shall prove that the one passage must follow the two.

Thus saith the Law — and Christ quotes it, (Matthew 18:16) — "Every case shall be established through the mouth of two or three witnesses, but at the mouth of one witness shall no man be put to death." And since I have two witnesses against one, my case takes precedence, and the one passage must follow the two; namely, that Peter received the keys not as Peter, but in the stead of the Church, FD62 as Matthew 28 and John clearly say, and not as Peter alone, as Matthew 16 seems to say.

Moreover, I am astounded at the great arrogance by which they would make the power of the keys a ruling power, which really fits together as well as winter and summer. For a ruling power means far more than the power of the keys. The power of the keys extends only to the Sacrament of Penance, FD63 to bind and loose the sins, as (Matthew 18:18) and (John 20:22) clearly state; but a ruling power extends likewise to those who are pious and have naught to be bound or loosed; its scope includes preaching, exhorting, consoling, saying mass, giving the Sacrament, etc.

Therefore, none of the three passages fits the power of the pope over all Christendom, except he were made the one confessor, or penitentiary, FD64 or anathematizer, to rule only over the wicked and the sinners, which is not their desire at all. And if these words should establish the papal power over all Christians, I should very much like to know who could absolve the pope when he sins. He must certainly remain in his sins; neither will it do for him to transfer his power to another for his own absolution, for that would make him a heretic in acting contrary to divine command.

Some have invented the fiction that the pope's person and office are two different things; FD65 that the person can be made subject to another, but not the office. That glitters for a moment, but is, in truth, like all such wares. For in their own laws, with great ado and show, they have forbidden any bishop of a lower rank to confirm a pope, although this confirmation is not the institution of the office, but the induction of the person into the office. And if in this case the person is not subject to any one, surely the same is true in absolution. But in all their doings and glosses and interpretations, their minds are in a whirl, and they say now this and now that; and in their twisting of God's Word they lose its true sense, forget where they are, go completely astray, and yet they would rule the whole world.

Therefore let every Christian believe that in these passages Christ does not give either to St. Peter or to the other Apostles the power to rule, or to soar so high. What then does He give? I will tell you. These words of Christ are nothing but gracious promises, given to the whole Church, FD66 as was said above, (Matthew 16:18), (Matthew 18:18), in order that poor sinful consciences may find comfort when they are "loosed" or absolved by man; and the words apply only to sinful, timid, troubled consciences, and are intended to strengthen them, if they but believe. When these comforting words of Christ, given for the benefit of all poor consciences in the whole Church, FD66 are thus made to strengthen and establish papal power, I will tell you of what it reminds me.

It reminds me of a rich, kind prince who threw open his treasure-house, and gave complete freedom to all the poor to come and take what they needed. Among the needy there came a rogue, who made use of the permission all by himself and allowed none to come in who did not bow completely to his will, and arbitrarily explained the words of the prince to mean that the permission was given to him alone. Can you imagine what the kind prince would think of this rogue? If you cannot imagine it, hear what St. Matthew says of that selfsame servant: "If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and of teeth."

And now see: in the same manner as this servant interprets the intention of his lord, so the Romanists interpret the words of God, and this is the very best that can be said of their interpretation. For when they go stark mad, they act as if you servant had not only made barter of his lord's kindness for his own profit, but as if he actually changed the goods, and gave chaff and stubble for corn, copper for gold, lead for silver, and poison for wine.

And therefore it is still a matter of grace, that they claim the keys for the pope at least in such a manner that we may buy them by giving money and everything that we possess. But it is an utter calamity when they preach their laws, authority, bans, indulgences and the like, in place of the Gospel.

That is what the Lord calls the smiting of the fellow servants by the evil servant, who should rather feed them.

I will use a plain illustration, so that any one may see the difference between the true and the false interpretation of these words of Christ. The high-priest of the Old Testament wore, by divine appointment, an official robe. When King Herod elevated himself over the people of Israel, he took that robe, and although he did not use it himself, yet he usurped the authority to regulate its use, and the people were forced to pay for that to which God had given them the right. The same is true now. The keys have been given to the whole Church FD68 as has been proved above. (Matthew 16:18), (Matthew 18:18), But along come the Romanists, and although they never use them themselves nor exercise their office, yet they take to themselves authority over the use of the keys, and we are forced to buy with money what is in reality our own, given by Christ. And, not satisfied with this, they apply the words of Christ concerning the keys, not to the keys nor to their use, but to their usurped power and authority over the keys, so that the power of the keys, freely given by Christ, is now captive in the hands of the Romanists; and both the power of the keys and the power over the keys are supposed to come from the one word of Christ, just as if Herod had said that it was his power of which Moses was speaking, when he spake of the robe of the high-priest.

In like manner, a tyrant could obtain possession of a last testament, and explain the words, wherein the property is bequeathed to the heir, to mean that authority is given him over this testament, to decide whether he will allow its provisions to come to the heir gratuitously or for a price. So it is also with the power of the keys and the authority of the pope, understood as coming from one and the same word [of Scripture], whereas the two things are not only different, but the authority claimed is more than the power of the keys; and yet they make of it one and the same thing.

Their argument, that the external authority of the pope is conferred in the words of Christ, "On this rock I will build My Church," understanding the rock to mean St. Peter and his authority, I have refuted many times, FD70 and now I will say only this: First, they must prove that the rock means authority. They will not do this, nor can they do it, so they just give voice to their own inventions, and all their drivel must be divine command.

Secondly, the rock can mean neither St. Peter nor his authority, on account of the words of Christ which follow, "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Now it is clear as day that no one is edified in the Church, nor withstands the gates of hell by the mere fact that he is under the external authority of the pope. For the majority of those who hold so strongly to the authority of the pope, and lean upon it, are themselves possessed by the powers of hell and are full of sins and rascality. Then, too, some of the popes were heretics themselves, and gave heretical laws; yet they remained in authority. Therefore, the rock does not signify authority, which can never withstand the gates of hell; but it signifies only Christ and the faith in Him, against which no power can ever prevail.

That this authority continues to exist despite those who battle against it, does not mean that it has withstood the gates of hell. For so the Greek Church has continued, and all the other Christians in the world; the Moscovites FD71 and Bohemians continue, yea, the kingdom of Persia has continued for more than two thousand years, and the Turk for well nigh a thousand years, in spite of various and repeated attacks against them. And to tell you some more things that really should bring astonishment to such an illustrious Romanist: The world in its wickedness has stood from the beginning, and shall stand until the Last Day, and forever, even if God Himself with all holy men and angels never cease to preach, write and work against it. If you think good of it, my dear Romanist, defy God and all the angels, because the world has stood even against all their words and work.

Why did you not ascertain, you poor, blind Romanist, before rushing into print, what it means "to prevail against the gates of hell?" If every prevailing means just as much as prevailing against the gates of hell, then the devil's kingdom prevails with a larger following than God's kingdom.

This is what it means to prevail against the gates of hell: Not to be in an external communion, FD72 authority, jurisdiction or assembly in a bodily manner, according to your way of babbling about the Roman communion FD72 and its unity, but by a firm and true faith to be built upon Christ, the Rock which can never be suppressed by any power of the devil, even if he counts more followers and uses unceasing strife, cunning, and violence against it.

Now the greater part of the Roman communion, FD72 and even some of the popes themselves, have forsaken the faith wantonly and without struggle, and live under the power of Satan, as is plainly to be seen, and thus the papacy often has been under the dominion of the gates of hell. And should I speak quite openly, this same Roman authority, ever since the time it has presumed to soar over all Christendom, not only has never attained its purpose, but has become the cause of nearly all the apostasy, heresy, discord, sects, unbelief and misery in Christendom, and has never freed itself from the gates of hell. And if there were no other passage to prove that Roman authority was of human and not of divine right, this passage alone would be sufficient, where Christ says, the gates of hell shall not prevail against His building on the rock. Now the gates of hell ofttimes had the papacy in their power, at times the pope was not a pious man, and the office was occupied by a man without faith, without grace, without good works; which God would never have permitted if the papacy were meant in Christ's word concerning the rock. For then He would not be true to His promise, nor fulfill His own word; therefore the rock, and the building of Christ founded upon it, must be something entirely different from the papacy and its external Church.

Accordingly I say further, that the Roman bishop has often been deposed or appointed by other bishops. If, however, his authority were by divine appointment and promise, God would never have permitted this to happen, for it would be against His word and promise. And if God were found to be unfaithful in so much as even one word, then would perish faith, truth, the Scriptures, and God Himself. But if God's words stand firm, then my adversaries must prove to me that the pope was never subject, even once, to Satan or to man. I would much like to hear just what my good Romanists have to say to this. I trust they are slain with their own sword, like Goliath. For I can prove that the papacy has been subject not only to Satan, but to other bishops, yea, also to temporal powers, to the emperors.

How did the rock prevail then against the gates of hell? I will leave the choice to them: either these words mean defeat for the papacy, or God is a liar. Let us see which they will choose.

Nor is it enough that you try to squirm out of the dilemma by saying that even if the papacy has been under Satan now and then, yet there have always been pious Christians under it. I reply: Under the rule of the Turk there are Christians, and likewise there are Christians in all the world, as there were aforetime under Nero and other tyrants. How does that help you? The papacy and the pope himself must at no time have been under Satan if Christ's word refers to them when He speaks of "a rock set against the gates of hell." See, thus do the Romanists interpret the Scriptures in accordance with their mad folly. Faith they turn into authority, spiritual edification into outward show, and yet they are not heretics — they make all others to be the heretics. Such are the Romanists.

Another passage which they cite in support of their contention is that in which the Lord says three times to Peter, "Feed My sheep." (John 21:15). Here they reach real eminence as theologians when they say: Since Christ said to Peter in particular, "Feed My sheep," He thereby conferred on him authority above all others.

Now we shall see to what labor and pains they are put to bring about that result. In the first place, we must know what they mean by "feeding." "Feeding," in the Roman sense, means to burden Christendom with many human and hurtful laws, to sell the bishoprics at the highest possible price, to extract the annates FD73 from all benefices, to usurp authority over all foundations, to force into servitude all the bishops with terrible oaths, to sell indulgences, to rob the whole world by means of letters, bulls, seals and wax, to prohibit the preaching of the Gospel, to appoint knaves from Rome to all the places, to bring all litigation to Rome, to increase quarrels and disputes — in short, to allow no one to come freely to the truth and to have peace.

But if they say that by "feeding" they do not understand such abuse of authority, but the authority itself, it is simply not true. And I prove it in this wise: Where one protests very mildly against such abuse, and with all deference to the authority, they rail and threaten thunder and lightning, they clamor that it is heresy and high treason, that it is a rending of the seamless garment of Christ, and they would burn up the heretics, rebels, apostates and everybody in the whole world. By all of which it is clear that they hold "feeding" to mean naught else but such preying and flaying. In the meanwhile, however, we think that feeding does not mean preying on others. Let us endeavor to see what it means.

They have a high-sounding, keen and subtle speech — as they imagine — when they say that person and office are not one and the same, and that the office remains, and remains good, though the person be evil. From this they conclude, and it must, indeed, follow, that the word of Christ, "Feed My sheep," means an office of external power, which even an evil man may have, for the office makes no one holy. Very well. This is acceptable to us, and we will ask the Romanists a question. Whoever keeps and fulfils the word of Christ, he is truly obedient and pious, and shall be saved, for His words are spirit and life. If, therefore, "feeding" means to sit in the highest place and to have an office even if the incumbent be a knave it follows that he feeds who sits in the highest seat and is pope; and whoever does this work of feeding is obedient to Christ; and whoever is obedient in one particular is obedient in all and is a saint. Therefore it must be true that whoever is pope and sits in the chief room is obedient to Christ and is a saint, though he be a knave, or a rogue, or what not. Have thanks, my dearest Romanists! Now I know, for the first time, why the pope is addressed as "your holiness." Thus must the word of Christ be explained, so that knaves and rogues are made out to be holy and obedient servants of Christ, just as in the previous pages you have made Christ an arch-knave and a brothel-keeper.

Further, if "feeding" means to sit in the highest place, then "being fed" must mean to be subject, so that just as "feeding" means external governing, "being fed" must mean to be governed, and, as they say, to live in the Roman fellowship. FD75 Then it must also be further true that all who are within the Roman fellowship, FD75 be they good or evil, are saints, because they are obedient to Christ and are being fed. For none can be obedient to Christ in one thing, without being obedient in all, as St. James says. (James 2:10). Now is that not a fine Church under the Roman authority, where there are no sinners at all and naught but saints! But what becomes of the poor indulgence, if no one needs it any more in the Roman fellowship? FD75 What becomes of the father confessor? How shall the world be robbed, if penance disappears? Nay, what becomes of the keys if they are no longer needed? But if there are still sinners among them, they must go unfed and be disobedient to Christ.

What do you say to this, my good Romanists? Come now and pipe your lay. Do you not see that "feeding" must mean something else than having authority, and "being fed" something else than being externally subject to the Roman power, and how utterly senseless it is to cite the saying of Christ, "Feed My sheep," in order to strengthen Roman authority and its external unity or fellowship!

Christ also says, "He that loveth Me, keepeth My word; he that loveth Me not, keepeth not My words." Prick up your ears at this, my dear Romanists. Ye boast that the word of Christ, "Feed My sheep," is a command and word of Christ. Let us ask, then, where are they who keep it? You say, even the knaves and rogues keep it. Christ says no one keepeth it, except he love and be a righteous man. Now come to some agreement with Christ in this matter, so that we may know if you or He is to be charged with lying. Therefore, the pope who loves not, and is not righteous, does not "feed the sheep," and does not keep Christ's word: neither is he a pope, nor has he authority, nor anything at all that is included in the term "feeding the sheep." For Christ stands immovable, and says, "He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My word;" nor does such a one perform any "feeding of sheep," i.e., he is no pope at all, as they explain it.

Thus it comes that the same passages which are cited in its favor are against the papacy; a just retribution for those who treat the holy Word of God in sheer madness, as though it were fool's talk, and who would make out of it what they please.

Perhaps you might reply, that a subject can be obedient to temporal authority even if that authority were not righteous; why should one not be obedient to the pope's authority? Therefore to "feed," or to "be fed," must not necessarily include the idea of obedience. Answer: The Scriptures do not call temporal authority "feeding," and in the New Testament there is no instance where God publicly appointed any one to temporal power, although no such power arises without His secret ordering. For this reason St. Peter calls such powers "ordinances of men," (1Peter 2:13), because they rule not by God's word, but by God's governance, and it is not needful, therefore, that such rulers should be righteous. But inasmuch as we here have God's word, "Feed my sheep," neither the shepherd nor the sheep can fulfill this word except by obedience to God and righteousness of life. Therefore I let bishop, pope, priest be what they may; unless they love Christ and are righteous, this term, "feeding," is not for them, and they are something entirely different from the shepherds and feeders of sheep who alone are meant in this word. For this reason it cannot be tolerated that this word of Christ shall be made to cover external power, which has nothing to do with obedience or disobedience to Him; "feeding" can mean naught else but to be obedient.

And this is what Christ desired. For before saying three times to Peter: "Feed My sheep," He asked him thrice if he loved Him, and Peter thrice answered that he loved Him. It is evident, therefore, that there is no "feeding" where there is no love. Therefore, the papacy either must be love, or it cannot be a feeding of the sheep, and if the word "Feed My sheep" establishes the papal chair, it follows that all are popes who love Christ and feed the sheep. And this is perfectly true: for aforetime all bishops were called popes, which title is now restricted to the one at Rome.

But here look you what our Romanists do when they cannot overcome these words of Christ, that no one can feed except he love Christ, as the clearly expressed words of Christ declare. Gladly they would give Him the lie, or deny Him; but now that they are hit squarely between the eyes, so that their heads swim, hear what they say. They say that Christ indeed demands love in the office of the pope, but not that high love, which, they say, is meritorious unto eternal life; but the ordinary love is quite sufficient, such as a servant has toward his master, FD76 Now see, this lying explanation FD77 of love they bring forth entirely out of their own heads, without warrant of the Scriptures, and yet they would have it appear that they are dealing with me in the Scriptures. Tell me, my dear Romanists, all of you melted together into one heap, where is there so much as one letter in the Scriptures concerning this love of which you dream? If your vile brew of Leipzig could speak, it would easily overcome such feather-brains, and speak better than you do of love.

But let us follow this matter further. If there must needs be some sort of love in the papacy, what becomes of it when a pope does not love Christ at all, and seeks in it only his own gain and honor? And there have been many such, yea, almost all since the beginning of the papacy. You have not escaped me yet — you must confess that the papacy has not always existed, it has often perished, because it was ofttimes without love. But if it had been established by divine right, in these words of Christ, it would not have perished. Twist and turn as you will, these words will not yield a papacy; or else the papacy must cease in Christendom whenever the pope is without love. Now you have said yourself that the person may be evil, but the office remains; again you admit, and must admit, that the office is nothing if the person be evil — or you must let "feeding the sheep" be something else than the papacy. And this is true; let us see what you can bring against it.

But let every one beware of the poisoned tongues and devil-glosses which can invent a love of such description. Christ speaks of the highest, strongest, best love of which man is capable. He will not be loved with a false, divided love; here there must be whole-hearted and pure love, or none at all. And the meaning of Christ is that in St. Peter's person He is instructing all preachers how they must be equipped; as if He would say: "See, Peter, if you shall preach My word, and thereby feed My sheep, there shall rise against you the powers of hell, devil, world, and all that therein is, and you must be willing to venture body, life, goods, honor, friends, and everything which you have; and this you will not do if you do not love Me and cleave dose to Me. And if you should begin to preach, and the sheep were being fed in the pastures, and the wolves would break in, and you would then flee as a hireling, and not venture your life, but leave the sheep without care, to the wolves, it would have been better that you had never begun to preach and feed the sheep." For if he falls, who preaches the Word and should stand at the head, offense is given to every one, the Word of God is brought to deepest disgrace, and more harm is done to the sheep than if they had no shepherd at all. Christ cares much for the feeding of the sheep; He cares nothing at all how many crowns the pope wears, and how in all his splendor he lifts himself far above the kings of the world.

Let any one tell if he can, whether the papacy has such love, or if Christ, in these words, has instituted such a worthless authority as the papacy is.

Without doubt he is truly a pope who preaches with such love; but where can such a one be found? There is no passage that gives me as much sorrow in my preaching as this one does — of love I feel not much, of preaching I do more than enough. They accuse me of being rabid and revengeful; I fear that I have done too little. I should have pulled the wool FD79 much harder for the ravening wolves, who never cease to rend the Scripture, to poison and pervert it to the great injury of the poor, forsaken sheep of Christ. If I had only loved them enough I should have dealt quite differently with the pope and his Romanists, who with their laws and their prattle, their letters of indulgence, and the rest of their foolery, bring to naught our faith and God's Word. They make for us what laws they will, only to capture us, and then sell them to us again for money; FD80 with their mouths they weave snares for money, and yet boast that they are shepherds and keepers of sheep, whereas they are truly wolves, thieves, and murderers, as the Lord says in (John 10:12); I know right well that this little word, "love," scares the pope and his Romanists and makes them weak and weary, nor are they willing that it should be pressed, for it overturns the whole papacy. It made Dr. Eck weary at Leipzig; FD81 and whom would it not make weary, since Christ directly commands Peter not to feed the sheep except there be love? He must have love or there can be no "feeding." I shall wait a while now to see how they will parry this thrust. If they prick me with "feeding," I will prick them much harder with "loving," and we shall see who prevails. This is the reason why some of the popes in their Canon laws so neatly pass in silence this word "love," and make so much ado about "feeding," thinking that thereby they have preached only to drunken Germans, who will not notice how the hot porridge burns their tongue. This is the reason, too, why the pope and the Romanists cannot bear any questioning and investigating of the foundation of papal power, and every one is accused of doing a scandalous, presumptuous and heretical thing, who is not satisfied with their mere assertions, but seeks for its real basis. But that one should ask if God is God, and seek in frivolous presumption to penetrate all His mysteries, they suffer with equanimity, and it does not concern them. Whence this perverted game? From this, that, as Christ says, (John 3:20): "He that doeth evil, feareth the light." Where is the thief or robber who courts investigation? Thus the evil conscience cannot bear the light; but truth loveth the light, and is an enemy to darkness, even as Christ says in the same chapter, (John 3:21): "He that doeth truth, cometh to the light."

Now we see that the two sayings of Christ, spoken to Peter, on which they build the papacy, are stronger against the papacy than all others, and the Romanists can produce nothing that does not make them a laughing-stock.

I shall let the matter rest here, and pass by whatever else this miserable Romanist spews out in his book; since I have controverted it all many times before, and now also some others have effectually done so in Latin. FD82 I find nothing in it, except that he soils the Holy Scriptures like a sniveling child; in no place does he show a mastery of his words or an understanding of his subject.

On the subject of the papacy I have come to this conclusion: Since we observe that the pope has full authority over all our bishops, and has not attained it apart from the providence of God — although I do not believe that it is a gracious, but rather a wrathful providence which permits men, as a plague on the world, to exalt themselves and oppress others — therefore I do not desire that any one should resist the pope, but rather bow to the providence of God, honor this authority, and endure it with all patience, just as if the Turk ruled over us; in this wise it will do no harm.

I contend for but two things. First: I will not suffer any man to establish new articles of faith, and to abuse all other Christians in the world, and slander and brand them as heretics, apostates and unbelievers, simply because they are not under the pope. It is enough that we let the pope be pope, and it is not needful that, for his sake, God and His saints on earth should be blasphemed. Second: All that the pope decrees and does I will receive, on this condition, that I first test it by the Holy Scriptures. He must remain under Christ, and submit to be judged by the Holy Scriptures.

But these Roman knaves come along, place him above Christ, and make him a judge over the Scriptures; they say that he cannot err, and whatever is dreamed at Rome, nay, everything which they dare to come out with, they would prescribe for us as articles of faith. And as if that were not enough, they would introduce a new kind of faith, so that we are to believe what we can see with our bodily eyes; whereas faith, by its very nature, is of the things which no one sees or feels, as St. Paul says in (Hebrews 11:1): Now the Roman authority and fellowship FD83 is a bodily thing, and can be seen by any one. If the pope came to that — which may God forbid! — I would say right out that he is the real Antichrist, of whom all the Scriptures speak.

If they grant me these two things, I will let the pope remain, nay, help to exalt him as high as they please; if not, he shall be to me neither pope nor Christian. He that must do it may make an idol of him; I will not worship him.

Moreover, I would be truly glad if kings, princes, and all the nobles would take hold, and turn the knaves from Rome out of the country, and keep the appointments to bishoprics and benefices out of their hands. How has Roman avarice come to usurp all the foundations, bishoprics and benefices of our fathers? Who has ever read or heard of such monstrous robbery? Do we not also have the people who need them, while out of our poverty we must enrich the ass-drivers and stable-boys, nay, the harlots and knaves at Rome, who look upon us as nothing else but arrant fools, and make us the objects of their vile mockery?

It is a notorious fact that the Russians desired to come into the Roman fellowship, but then the holy shepherds of Rome "fed" those sheep of Christ in such a manner that they would not receive them unless they first bound themselves to a perpetual tax of I know not how many hundred thousands of ducats. Such "food" they would not eat, and so they remain as they are, saying, if they must buy Christ, they would rather save their money until they come to Christ Himself, in heaven. Thus thou doest, thou scarlet whore of Babylon, as St. John (Revelation 17:4) calls thee — makest out of our faith a mockery for all the world, and yet wouldest have the name of making every one a Christian.

Oh the pity, that kings and princes have so little reverence for Christ, and His honor concerns them so little that they allow such heinous abominations to gain the upper hand, and look on, while at Rome they think of nothing but to continue in their madness and to increase the abounding misery, until no hope is left on earth except in the temporal authorities. Of this I will say more anon, FD84 if this Romanist comes again; let this suffice for a beginning. May God help us at length to open our eyes.

Amen.

As for the slanders and evil names with which my person is assailed, although numerous enough, I will let my dear Romanist off without reply.

They do not trouble me. It has never been my intention to avenge myself on those who rail at my person, my life, my work, my doings. That I am not worthy of praise, I myself know full well. But I will let no man reproach me that in defending the Scriptures I am more pointed and impetuous than some seem to like, neither will I be silenced. Whoever will, let him freely scold, slander, condemn my person and my life; it is already forgiven him. But let no one expect from me either grace or patience who would make my Lord Christ, Whom I preach, and the Holy Ghost, to be liars. I am nothing at all, but for the Word of Christ I give answer with joyful heart and vigorous courage, and without respect of persons. To this end God has given me a glad and fearless spirit, which they shall not embitter, I trust, not in all eternity.

That I have mentioned Leipzig, no one should consider an affront to the honorable city and University. I was forced to it by the vaunted, arrogant, fictitious title of this Romanist, who boasts that he is a public teacher of all the Holy Scriptures at Leipzig, FD85 which titles have never before been used in Christendom, and by his dedication FD86 to the city and its Council.

If the jackanapes had not issued his book in German, in order to poison the defenceless laity, he would have been too small for me to bother with. For this clumsy ass cannot yet sing his hee-haw, and quite uncalled, he meddles in things which the Roman chair itself, together with all the bishops and scholars, has not been able to establish in a thousand years.

I should have thought, too, that Leipzig ought to have been too precious in his eyes, for him to smear his drivel and snivel on so honorable and famous a city; but in his own imagination he is no ordinary man. I perceive that if I permit the petulance of all these thick-heads, even the bath-maids will finally write against me.

But I pray that whoever would come at me arm himself with the Scriptures. What helpeth it, that a poor frog puffeth himself up? Even if he should burst, he is no ox.

I would gladly be out of this business, and they force themselves into it.

May God grant both of us our prayers, — help me out of it, and let them stick in it. Amen. *All glory be to God on high, And praise to all eternity. Amen.*

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